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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MAPUTO 001196

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/FO AND AF/S

NSC FOR COURVILLE

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MZ](#) [FRELIMO](#)

SUBJECT: PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE GUEBUZA ON BILATERAL

RELATIONS, CAMPAIGN, PLANS FOR GOVERNING

REF: MAPUTO 1154

Classified By: AMBASSADOR HELEN LA LIME, REASON 1.5(D)

1.(C) Summary: Ruling party presidential candidate Guebuza told Ambassador La Lime he hoped to capitalize on the surprisingly widespread sympathy for Mozambique he found in his July trip to the U.S. He described the recent violent RENAMO-FRELIMO skirmishes in Sofala province (reftel) as troubling but limited confrontations. He appeared confident that he would win the December 1-2 elections. Guebuza cited as priorities for his government decentralization, training, fighting AIDS, and most of all getting results. He also acknowledged deficiencies in the police and courts. End Summary.

2.(U) Ambassador La Lime and DCM met on September 6 with ruling party presidential candidate Armando Guebuza. Since returning from a July visit to the United States to attend the Democratic convention and meet with Administration officials, Guebuza has been making high-profile appearances throughout the country, visiting all provinces except Maputo. Although formal campaigning may not begin until mid-October, Guebuza has been much more visible to date than his only significant opponent, RENAMO leader and two-time unsuccessful candidate Afonso Dhlakama, who recently visited China and is currently in the United States.

Bilateral Relations

3.(C) Ambassador La Lime reviewed key bilateral themes and our interest in strengthening the relationship. She noted the visit the previous week of a Millennium Challenge Corporation team to consult with Mozambicans preparing the country's proposal for MCC assistance. She explained that the House's cut in the Administration's FY05 budget proposal meant that Mozambique would need to set priorities among the several projects it had initially identified. On HIV/AIDS issues, she explained that, despite some recent press reports, the USG cooperates regularly with GRM health officials and seeks their advice in shaping our comprehensive program. She also noted our desire to strengthen our trade and investment relationship and said that a first step would be Mozambican enactment of the 1999 bilateral investment agreement, once we confirm whether executive decree is acceptable or whether legislative approval is necessary.

4.(C) Guebuza said that during his July trip to the U.S. he had been pleasantly taken aback by the amount of sympathy he found for Mozambique. He noted that in earlier times he had found widely differing views within the U.S., but that now the support seemed widespread, and he was very interested in capitalizing on it. On development issues, he acknowledged the Mozambican MCC team's focus on the private sector and said the country needed to increase Mozambicans' management capacity.

Presidential Campaign

5.(C) Guebuza said he would formally present his candidacy for the December 1-2 elections later that day. He described the recent violent RENAMO-FRELIMO skirmishes in Sofala province (reftel) as troubling but limited confrontations that were not the crisis that the press was portraying. The Ambassador noted our concern over the Inhaminga violence. Guebuza acknowledged the need to incorporate RENAMO candidate Dhlakama's armed bodyguards into the police; he said this had been a problem for ten years that needed to be resolved, but he noted that both sides were now making statements of intent to resolve it. He said that the creation of jobs would prevent people from thinking of war, and he emphasized the positive role that could be played by the Sena railway line that the World Bank had just agreed to fund.

6.(C) In response to a question about varying analyses of RENAMO's strength, Guebuza disagreed with the idea that RENAMO's support was stronger than FRELIMO's in the rural areas that make up most of the country and that were not included in last year's municipal elections. He noted that most of the municipalities that FRELIMO had won last year were in fact more rural than urban, and he appeared confident that FRELIMO had majority support in the country as a whole.

He acknowledged the importance of the electoral process and said FRELIMO was ready to accept a fair result. He expected a peaceful election without great difficulties and welcomed the likely visit of former President Carter to oversee the Carter Center's monitoring effort. Though he noted that it was good to see ex-presidents doing such things, he did not raise the topic of what, if any, role President Chissano might play in Mozambique after leaving the office he has held since 1986.

Looking to a Guebuza Government

7.(C) Guebuza said that his government would value and benefit from the experience FRELIMO had gained since 1974. He cited decentralization as a focus and said he wanted to increase the government's capacity to make a difference in rural areas. He also emphasized the need for more training, a focus of the GRM's dialogue with the World Bank. He cited the lack of technical schools in rural areas as a key deficiency he had identified in his travels over the last month. Guebuza noted as well the importance of fighting AIDS. In response to the Ambassador's comment that the justice system was inhibiting investment and growth, he acknowledged problems with both the police and the courts, though he described them as being in rural areas. He said Mozambicans needed to know that their actions would bring clear responses from all areas of the justice system. Guebuza emphasized his focus on monitoring and results in all government efforts.

8.(C) Comment: It appeared that Guebuza was being careful to avoid any perception that he would act differently from the popular Chissano, with whom he is not close. He made a point the Prime Minister also made to the MCC team when they visited last week, which is that the reform priorities have been set and forward movement on them will continue. While Guebuza's priorities do not sound all that different from Chissano's, he is widely viewed as one who would be tougher on accountability and on delivery of results, should he be elected as Mozambique's next President. End comment.

LA LIME